

Statement
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House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on International Development,
International Organizations and Global Corporate Social Impact
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Thank you, Chairman Castro, Ranking Member Malliotakis, and members of the Subcommittee for having me here today to discuss the FY23 budget request for the United Nations and other international organizations.

The Bureau of International Organization Affairs, IO, prioritizes our engagement with the UN and multilateral system not only to advance U.S. national interests and counter our competitors, but also to strengthen the international system to address today's global challenges and deliver benefits to the American people.

We continue to push for reforms to ensure that international organizations deliver results with good governance, efficiency, and accountability. I greatly appreciate the strong interest of this Subcommittee in this important work.

I last saw you all on February 15; it has been an eventful last four months, to say the least. IO successfully mobilized to bring our partners on board to win overwhelming UN General Assembly condemnation of Russia's aggression just days after Russia's unprovoked further invasion of Ukraine, as well as swift international affirmation of the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity.

We isolated and blocked Russia from leadership in numerous UN bodies, including suspension from the Human Rights Council (HRC). We galvanized partners to hold Russia accountable by helping establish an independent Commission of Inquiry to investigate Russia's violations and abuses of human rights in Ukraine.

We also recognized early on that strategic, targeted actions across the UN's specialized and technical agencies would be crucial for cementing international consensus calling out Russia's human rights violations and war crimes.

We won adoption of joint statements and resolutions calling Russia out for its illegal aggression against Ukraine across the UN system, including within the Food and Agriculture Organization, World Health Assembly, International Civil

Aviation Organization, International Telecommunication Union, and UN Environmental Assembly to name just a few. We worked successfully with like-minded governments to block the election of Russia to the World Food Programme Executive Board.

As we remain focused on the urgent Ukraine crisis, we are also committed to protecting and strengthening the rules-based international order – the system of law, instruments, and institutions to prevent conflict and promote the rights of all people.

Secretary Blinken made these points in his recent speech on the Administration's approach to the People's Republic of China. He emphasized the importance of working with our allies and partners to advance our vision for an open and inclusive international system.

Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield testified before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs this morning.

She highlighted that the President's budget makes the case for the resources and authorities needed to assert multilateral leadership – and that our failure to live up to our financial obligations at the UN gives our adversaries an easy talking point with which to criticize us and undermine our positions.

We need to be able to pay our assessments in full and on time; this not only helps bolster U.S. leadership in the multilateral arena but helps us rally countries to our cause. Paying our peacekeeping arrears is essential to maximizing U.S. credibility and influence at the UN.

We need to be at the table when international consensus is being built so we can advance U.S. values and interests. Thus, the President's budget requests authority and funding to enable U.S. leadership in organizations such as UNESCO. In the absence of U.S. leadership at UNESCO, the PRC and others have been more assertive there, seeking to shape the debate on issues like artificial intelligence in ways hostile to democratic norms.

Across the UN, we see the PRC and Russia attempting to chip away at human rights. IO is working hard to counter this disturbing trend.

We advanced U.S. priorities at our first session as a UN Human Rights Council member in the March session; we succeeded in passing U.S. priority resolutions to renew mandates on Syria, Belarus, Iran, and North Korea.

We renewed the South Sudan Commission on Human Rights and established a new reporting mechanism on human rights in Nicaragua. Looking ahead to the next HRC session later this month, we will argue strongly for a robust Joint Statement criticizing the open-ended mandate of the Israel Commission of Inquiry.

We will advocate for a strong Joint Statement on PRC human rights violations in Xinjiang and elsewhere. We will lead lobbying efforts to ensure the renewal of the Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity mandate, expanding the inclusion and protection of members of marginalized and vulnerable groups, and focus on the HRC's work to promote the rights of women and girls.

Now, turning to New York, you may have noted that we used our May Security Council presidency to focus on food security. Between 2016 and 2021, the number of people living in acute food insecurity skyrocketed from 108 million people to 161 million people around the world.

And that was before Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, which may drive 40 million additional people worldwide into extreme poverty and food insecurity this year.

We have built growing international solidarity behind U.S. initiatives to address global food insecurity. Secretary of State Blinken hosted a UN Security Council meeting in May to clearly define the link between conflict and food insecurity.

He also hosted a ministerial meeting in which he highlighted that every driver of food insecurity has been made worse by President Putin's war of choice. Thus far, 86 countries have signed on to the roadmap we launched at that meeting to tackle the growing global food security crisis.

We are working right now with countries around the world to urge them to increase the resources they are providing to the World Food Program and the Food and Agriculture Organization. We're pressing countries that have large stockpiles of food to make those available, and to avoid food export restrictions.

IO is focused on a range of evolving challenges, including the emergence and re-emergence of infectious diseases.

This spring, our IO team demonstrated multilateral leadership and responsible financial stewardship by convincing World Health Organization members to agree to a path toward reform and stable funding that will strengthen WHO structurally and financially and promote greater accountability.

This is a major achievement given the urgent need for WHO to lead globally on the ongoing COVID-19 response, and to prepare for and respond to future pandemics and health emergencies.

And two weeks ago, against the backdrop of the tragic loss of more than 6 million lives to COVID-19 around the world, the United States and Member States of the World Health Assembly gathered in Geneva and decided on a way forward on improving international health regulations for disease outbreaks.

With the right global notification and data sharing systems in place, pandemics are preventable, and all governments should be taking steps to protect their citizens and to share information to help other governments do likewise.

We continue to work with our partners – and lead the way – to ensure that the UN is fit for purpose, advances global stability and security, and operates with greater efficiency and accountability. We also continue to invest in promoting U.S. citizens in the UN system through targeted advocacy and support for the Junior Professional Officers program.

The world needs active American leadership on the global stage; and sustaining such an effort requires your advice and support. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you, and I welcome your questions.